



# Top Tips For GP Collaborations

## For Derby & Derbyshire LMC Practice Members

# Top Tips For Your GP Practice

Collaboration can create new efficiencies, allow practices to take on new services and new income streams as well as create changes that benefit patients and the community.

We have prepared some top tips for GP Practices who are considering practice collaborations on how to make it a success and avoid common pitfalls:

## 1. Planning For Success

Are you looking to support your practice or are you looking to help others? Are you looking for a way to build resilience, sustainability or to increase patient access?

A successful collaboration is likely to be based on good relationships, so spend some time at the outset ensuring you can work together. Once you understand why you are collaborating this can feed into a business plan - a document which sets out your path and allows you to identify 'easy wins' and a platform for growth. Working out 'why' will help you establish 'how'.

## 2. What Is Your Purpose?

Do you want to share clinical or back office staff? Are you looking to bid for clinical contracts or just share administrative resources (for example; computer systems)?

If funding is available to work collaboratively, are there any conditions attached to its use?



### 3. Premises and Staff

Will your collaboration use existing premises? Is the premises solution in line with any lease requirements or does it need documenting separately? Be aware that reorganising how existing services are delivered can have an impact on employees under TUPE. VAT liability issues can also arise when providing shared staffing solutions so do speak with a specialist medical accountant.

### 4. Finance and Tax

Seek advice on potential tax liability and its impact early. A key issue to consider when sharing staff is whether doing so leads to a VAT liability. An specialist accountant can help here, and a solicitor can help structure the staff sharing arrangement to mitigate any potential liability.

### 5. Funding and Sharing Gains/Losses

Arrange and discuss funding from the outset. Are you being funded by the CCG, member practices, a bank, a mix or all of them? If member practices are funding the project decide and agreed how and what terms. Consider how practices are financially rewarded, but also how financial liability is shared across the group.

### 6. Collaboration Structure

Form follows function. Once you can answer the above questions, it will help you determine whether you need a simple collaboration agreement or a separate legal entity (distinct from the constituent practices). A separate entity is a 'legal person' and can hold property etc. in its own right. Whilst shareholders will own a company, they do not directly own assets owned by the company.

### 7. Governance

Establish clear governance and decision making arrangements. How are decisions made and voting rights calculated? Does each practice have an equal vote or are votes proportionate to list size? Have an appropriate written agreement in place? All key arrangements should be documented. Much like how a partnership should have a partnership deed, a collaborative group should have written terms of reference. This helps deal with conflicts but can also be the basis for more formal arrangements if commencing with a loose collaboration. It can also set the lines for any issues around liability and use of any initial cash contributions.

### 8. Engage With Third Parties

Engage with commissioners, regulators and any other third parties including banks and landlords early and transparently. Let them know what you are doing and understand their requirements.

### 9. Take Professional Advice

Take professional advice. It is vital to seek specialist legal and accounting advice before embarking on your project as well as during and beyond to ensure its success.







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- Neil Kerfoot, Kingswood Health Centre

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Local Practice Manager

*"I would like to say that we have been delighted with the advice you have offered. You have always been very approachable, both by email and phone, with prompt replies written in English that even a doctor can understand!"*

Fiona Short, Honiton Surgery

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